

Appln. No. 09/368,572
Amd. dated January 16, 2004
Reply to Office Action of October 29, 2003

REMARKS

The Office Action has been carefully reviewed. No claim is allowed. Claims 13, 14, 17 and 18 presently appear in this application and define patentable subject matter warranting their allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are hereby respectfully solicited.

Claim 16 has been objected to as being a substantial duplicate of claim 14. This objection is obviated by the cancellation of claim 16.

The rejection of claims 3-6, 15, and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is now moot in view of the cancellation of the rejected claims, without prejudice to the filing of a continuation application thereon.

Claims 13, 14, 17 and 18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 13 and 17 are now rewritten in independent form, thereby placing claims 13, 14, 17 and 18 in condition for allowance.

In view of the above, the claims comply with 35 U.S.C. §112 and define patentable subject matter warranting their

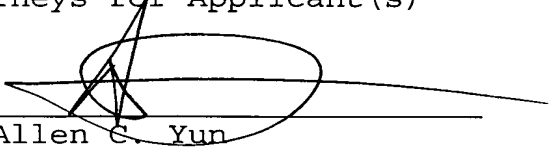
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allowance. Favorable consideration and early allowance are earnestly urged.

Respectfully submitted,

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